

bayberry string quartet

Virtual Rehearsing Part Three: 7 Rehearsal Tips

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As you venture into the virtual rehearsal world, here are some suggestions to help you make progress. The basic concept is to record each voice one at a time and layer them (see our last two blogs for more information), but as you'll see, there are many ways to make that happen.

Each of these strategies can be used for one measure, an individual phrase, a section (e.g. exposition), or even the whole piece. Discuss each track as you go to keep the process collaborative.

- 1. Melody first:** Start with the melody player recording his/her/their part. This recording could be as short as a couple of bars or as long as the whole piece. Then, layer the other group members one by one on that track, often with the lowest voice going second. It may feel awkward at first, but there's useful information in this process.
- 2. Rhythm first:** Find which voice has the most control of the pulse and start layering with that voice rather than the melody.
- 3. Sectionals:** If there's a spot that involves a portion of your group (say, the inner voices of a string quartet), have those people rehearse their part separately from the rest of the group, then layer the rest of the group once they're ready.
- 4. Intonation:** Start with the lowest voice playing the passage slowly or out of time, then medium tempo, then up to tempo. Then, layer the other voices from lowest to highest part.
- 5. Groove:** Struggling to line up your rhythms? Have a metronome clicking during the first layer. (Pro tip: when the metronome icon is green, the click will stay on in your head phones while you record). Or even better, create a funky beat on BandLab. You can also have someone record a track while counting their part in an expressive way. A live person counting gives a level of flexibility that is not as easy to achieve with metronome.
- 6. Individual assignments:** Have one or all group members record a section of the piece or even the whole piece by themselves, and then discuss the track as a group. This approach offers an excellent opportunity to learn to give direct comments to one another and also to learn how to take a comment constructively and make immediate changes.
- 7. Zoom AND Bandlab:** Schedule a group meeting via Zoom where you listen to each other play individually AND record/layer via Bandlab. The result is instant feedback and layering. Bayberry String Quartet is in the throes of rehearsing this way!